

REGIONAL REINVENTION

EMPOWERING LOCALS TO DRIVE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Michigan has earned the title of America's comeback state. It's an economic success story that would not be possible without collaboration by the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Our shared accomplishments during the past two years underscore the need to work in partnership toward a common vision of economic prosperity. That's the goal of Gov. Rick Snyder's Regional Reinvention Initiative.

While Michigan's future is bright, our job creators, local governments and nonprofit leadership face stiff global competition. We must recognize that the world does not simply identify with local units of government, individual counties or even the entire state of Michigan. It is the uniqueness of our regions – Greater Detroit, the Traverse City region, the West Michigan shoreline, the magnificence of the Upper Peninsula and similar corridors throughout our state – that makes the world take notice. These regions drive Michigan's economy and define its character.

Michigan has numerous regional entities, including regional planning and development organizations, metropolitan planning organizations and workforce boards. Unfortunately, they were designed in such a way that results in overlapping goals and competing priorities. Where local and regional collaboration is occurring, it often is cumbersome and is happening in spite of a structure that seems designed to dissuade it. Michigan needs to provide a structure that supports and encourages collaboration rather than discourages it.

A comprehensive economic development strategy can only be realized when leaders in the business development, talent development and infrastructure development communities unite in a common vision and strategy. Currently, each of these systems is struggling with a decrease in federal funding. This demands that the state and our regional providers break from the business-as-usual approach to ensure that the available resources have the greatest impact possible for job creators and residents.

No one is more aware of the challenges that lie ahead than the men and women who provide these critical services every day. The governor's Regional Prosperity Initiative is based on the principle that local citizens and their leaders – not Lansing – are best suited to determine the future of local and regional economies. It rejects the one-size-fits-all economic model and instead provides resources for local private, public and nonprofit leaders to successfully determine where they want to go and what steps they can take together to get there.

It's time to unleash the energy and innovation that abound across our state. Stronger local and regional collaboration will drive economic investment, lead to greater quality of place and increase business and talent attraction. As we continue to reinvent Michigan, we must empower our local leaders to drive economic prosperity through collaboration.

THE BASICS

What is the Regional Prosperity Initiative?

The Regional Prosperity Initiative is a voluntary competitive grant process that is included in the Governor's FY 2014 Executive Budget Recommendation to encourage local private, public and non-profit partners to create vibrant regional economies. The legislature approved the recommended process and the Regional Prosperity Initiative was signed into law as a part of the FY 2014 budget (59 PA 2013).

Who is eligible to apply for grants under the Regional Prosperity Initiative?

Existing State Designated Planning Regions and Metropolitan Planning Organizations are eligible to apply for grants from the Regional Prosperity Initiative. However, they will not qualify for any funding at any level unless they are collaborating with business and non-profit representatives as well as representatives from local and regional economic development organizations, workforce boards, adult education providers and the higher education community.

Why do we need a formal mechanism for regional collaboration? Why is it important?

As it stands today, many of Michigan's regions and their various public planning and service delivery entities have overlapping responsibilities yet competing visions for their economic priorities. The absence of a broad based regional vision and coordination of services create both redundancies and gaps. This creates confusion for local, state, federal, private and non-profit partners seeking to invest in a region's success. Formalizing a collaborative relationship among local and regional partners will allow the state, as well as private and non-profit stakeholders, to recognize local efforts and work in closer collaboration with local and regional decision makers throughout the state to support their efforts for economic prosperity.

DETAILS FOR DECISION-MAKERS

How will local governments benefit from the Regional Prosperity Initiative?

Currently, state officials in Lansing are tasked with trying to decipher what is in the best economic interest of Michigan's regions. The Regional Prosperity Initiative empowers local governments within a region to better determine and affect the factors that drive economic prosperity. This initiative recognizes that local partners, who are well-informed and well-resourced, are in a better position to make those decisions and creates the opportunity for them to do so. This formal regional collaboration also provides opportunity for shared service delivery and technical assistance for local communities from their regions. In addition, by creating a strong regional strategy for economic prosperity, local partners will be better able to compete locally in an increasingly global economy.

How will the State of Michigan benefit from the Regional Prosperity Initiative?

The Regional Prosperity Initiative will ensure that the State of Michigan is investing in the success of our regions, their local communities, and our economy in ways that are meaningful to the people who are working, playing and doing business there every day. This will ensure that our finite resources are being used wisely. As a result of collaborative efforts for regional prosperity, the state will also be better equipped to attract and retain talent that is so essential to remaining globally competitive. Finally, strong regions will give the state a new avenue by which to deliver state services that is more efficient and responsive to the needs of the regional economy.

How will the Federal government benefit from the Regional Prosperity Initiative?

As federal dollars become scarcer, our federal partners are looking for innovative states that can demonstrate collaborative efforts which are producing positive outcomes. Partners in this initiative will be at the forefront nationally, demonstrating the ability to leverage various resources for a comprehensive economic strategy.

How will these regions ensure transparency and accountability?

All participating applicants, as public bodies, will be subject to standard transparency and accountability requirements including the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act. Federal requirements for many of the eligible regional entities also require that they be governed by persons who are appointed by local public officials. This adds an additional element of accountability to the Regional Prosperity Initiative.

How will the progress and success of the regions be measured and reported?

Participating regions will be required to publicly post meeting materials and track progress through a publicly available dashboard that displays measurable annual goals. Grants awarded as part of the Regional Prosperity Initiative will be evaluated annually, contingent with the budget process. Metrics that are locally decided and collaboratively developed will be available to ensure accountability and document progress.

How are the Regional Prosperity Initiative and the Economic Vitality Incentive Program (EVIP) different?

The Regional Prosperity Initiative is aimed at empowering local and regional partners to develop a consensus vision and implementation plan for economic prosperity. EVIP is designed to allow and incent local governments to engage in collaborative efforts that will provide services in the most effective and efficient way possible. The purpose of the Regional Prosperity Initiative is much broader and focuses on economic prosperity through coordinated economic, talent and infrastructure strategies that are targeted, deliberate and ongoing. It is also important to note that none of the eligible applicants for the Regional Prosperity Initiative qualify for EVIP funding.

DETAILS FOR REGIONS

Is the Regional Prosperity Initiative a state mandate?

No. The proposed Regional Prosperity Initiative is voluntary. We all benefit when local and regional partners work in close collaboration toward a shared vision of economic prosperity. The Regional Prosperity Initiative is intended to provide resources to regions to empower and encourage them to do just that.

Do the requirements of the Regional Prosperity Initiative conflict with any federal program requirements?

No. The proposed Regional Prosperity Initiative actually requires that regions meet all pertinent federal program requirements currently required of each partner entity, including those required by the Economic Development Administration, Department of Transportation and Department of Labor. Better regional collaboration of federally required efforts will help partners leverage the resources available to complete this work in a way that is most beneficial for the region's purposes.

Does the Regional Prosperity Initiative require the structure for collaboration to be uniform across regions? Will all regions receive the same funding?

No. The Regional Prosperity Initiative seeks to recognize the unique needs and assets of all of our regions and avoids a "one-size fits all" approach. Regions that choose to participate in the Regional Prosperity Initiative have three options for participation with different accompanying funding levels that are outlined in the chart below:

| | Regional Prosperity Collaborative | Regional Prosperity Council | Regional Prosperity Board |
|---|--|---|---|
| Incentive Based Funding | Up to \$250,000 | Up to \$375,000 | Up to \$500,000 |
| Eligible Applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Designated Planning Regions Metropolitan Planning Organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Designated Planning Regions Metropolitan Planning Organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Designated Planning Regions Metropolitan Planning Organizations |
| Regional Structure Description | A Regional Prosperity Collaborative is any committee currently existing or developed by a regional planning organization which serves to bring organizational representation together among the required participants (see below) from within a region for the purpose of creating a regional prosperity plan. | A Regional Prosperity Council has shared administrative services and an executive governing entity, as demonstrated by a formal local agreement(s) | A Regional Prosperity Board, at a minimum, must demonstrate the consolidation of regional metropolitan planning organization board(s), state designated regional planning agency board(s), workforce development board(s), and federally designated economic development district(s). |
| Required Participants | Regional private, public and non-profit representatives from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult education Workforce development Economic development, Transportation; Higher education organizations. | Regional private, public and non-profit representatives from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult education Workforce development Economic development, Transportation; Higher education organizations. | Regional private, public and non-profit representatives from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult education Workforce development Economic development, Transportation; Higher education organizations. |
| Deliverables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 5 year regional prosperity plan, including an economic development blueprint; and A performance dashboard and measurable annual goals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A status report of the approved five-year plan A ten-year regional prosperity plan, including an economic development blueprint; and A performance dashboard with measurable annual goals A prioritized list of regional projects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A status report of the approved ten-year plan Including a state report of the approved performance dashboard and measurable annual goals A regional services recommendations report outlining the prioritized list of state funded services and programs provided to the region and recommendations for state-regional partnerships to support the adopted 10 year plan |
| Additional Structural Requirements | | The council shall identify additional opportunities for shared administrative services and decision-making among the private, public and non-profit entities within the region | The board, at a minimum, must demonstrate the consolidation of regional metropolitan planning organization board(s), state designated regional planning agency board(s), workforce development board(s), and federally designated economic development district(s). |

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